

In re Patent Application of:  
TORRES ET AL.  
Serial No. 09/774,393  
Filed: JANUARY 31, 2001

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That Claimed is:

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10. (Currently amended) A prepaid healthcare service system comprising:  
  
a plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers ~~positioned~~ to identify information associated with ~~one of~~ a respective plurality of patients, each one of the plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers associated with one patient and having a preselected number of prepaid healthcare consultations associated therewith; and  
  
a network of physicians comprising a plurality of physicians that provide healthcare consultations to the

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respective plurality of patients that possess the respective plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers, each of the plurality of physicians accepting said the plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers to provide at least one of the as recognition that each of the prepaid healthcare patient identifiers includes a preselected number of prepaid healthcare consultations associated with one of the respective plurality of prepaid healthcare identifiers therewith taking place between one of the plurality of patients and one of the plurality of physicians in the network of physicians;

said plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers being distributed by the plurality of physicians in the network to physicians so that the physician that distributes said plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers receives payment for the prepaid healthcare consultations associated with said plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers prior to providing the prepaid healthcare consultations.

11. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 10, further comprising a patient identifier reading means positioned reader at a location of each of the plurality of physicians in the network of physicians for reading the prepaid healthcare patient identifiers to thereby identify each one of the plurality of

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patients as being associated with the plurality of physicians in the network of physicians providing a preselected number of prepaid healthcare consultations to each one of the plurality of patients.

12. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 11, wherein each of the plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers further comprises a card having a flexible body and having indicia positioned on a surface portion of the flexible body for identifying a medical network associated with the plurality of physicians in the network of physicians.

13. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 12, further comprising a tracking means tracker positioned on the surface of the body of the card for tracking the preselected number of prepaid healthcare consultations associated with each of the plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers.

14. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 13, further comprising an updating means updater positioned on the surface of the body of the card for updating information regarding each of the plurality of patients and each of the plurality of physicians in the network of physicians.

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15. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 14, further comprising a ~~distributing means~~ distributor for distributing ~~the~~ said plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers to the plurality of patients.

16. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 15, wherein said distributor ~~the distributing means~~ further comprises a distribution device having an outer surface portion and positioned in a public location and comprising ~~the~~ said plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers positioned therein, and further comprising a purchaser ~~purchasing means~~ positioned adjacent the outer surface for purchasing at least one of said ~~the~~ plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers.

17. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 16, wherein the purchaser ~~purchasing means further~~ comprises a payment device that accepts a predetermined payment for each of ~~the~~ said plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers, and wherein ~~upon recognition of the payment,~~ the distribution device dispenses at least one of the said plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers upon receipt of the predetermined payment.

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18. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 17, further comprising a prepaid healthcare patient ~~identifiers activating means~~ identifier activator for activating each one of ~~the~~ said plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers dispensed from the distribution device.

19. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 18, wherein ~~the activating means further~~ said prepaid healthcare patient identifier activator comprises a telephone, wherein one of ~~the~~ said plurality of patients that purchases one of the plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers uses the telephone to contact a healthcare representative, and wherein the healthcare representative activates the prepaid healthcare patient identifier.

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43. (Currently amended) A method of providing a prepaid healthcare service system, the method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

distributing a plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers to a plurality of patients, each of the plurality of prepaid healthcare patients identifiers identifying information associated with each of the plurality of patients and also identifying a plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations between each of the plurality of patients and a plurality of physicians in a network of physicians, the plurality of patients thereby defining a plurality of members enrolled in the prepaid healthcare service ~~program~~ system; and

identifying at least one of the plurality of ~~physician~~ physicians in the network of physicians to provide at least one of the plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations to at least one of the plurality of members enrolled in the prepaid healthcare service program; and

providing payment to the respective physician in the network of physicians that distributes the respective prepaid healthcare patient identifier upon distribution of the prepaid healthcare patient identifier so that the respective physician that distributes the respective prepaid healthcare patient identifier is provided payment prior to providing the prepaid

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healthcare consultation.

44. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A method of providing a prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 43, further comprising ~~the step of~~ reading each one of the plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers using a patient identifier reader positioned at a location of each one of the plurality of physicians in the network of physicians.

45. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A method of providing a prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 44, further comprising ~~the step of~~ tracking the plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations associated with each of the prepaid healthcare patient identifiers, ~~the step of and~~ wherein tracking including includes monitoring a remaining number of prepaid healthcare consultations associated with the prepaid healthcare identifier and informing each of the plurality of patients when the remaining number of prepaid healthcare ~~consultation~~ consultations is equal to or less than a predetermined number.

46. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A method of providing a prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 45, further comprising ~~the step of~~ updating information on each of the plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers regarding each of the plurality of patients.



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47. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A method of providing a prepaid healthcare service system as described in Claim 46, further comprising ~~the step of~~ recharging each of the plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers, ~~the step of~~ and wherein recharging the prepaid healthcare patient identifiers ~~including the step of~~ includes purchasing additional prepaid healthcare consultations.

48. (Currently amended) A method of selling a plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

distributing a first plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers having a plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations associated therewith from a first individual physician in a network of physicians to a first plurality of physicians in the network of physicians and a first plurality of patients, so that the first individual physician receives payment for the prepaid healthcare consultations prior to providing the plurality prepaid healthcare consultations; and

distributing a second plurality of prepaid healthcare patient identifiers having a plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations associated therewith from the first plurality of physicians to a second plurality of physicians in the network of physicians and a second plurality of patients, the first and second plurality of patients defining members in

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a prepaid healthcare service system.

49. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A method of selling a plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations as described in Claim 48, further compromising ~~the step of~~ selecting at least one physician from the network of physicians for providing at least one of the plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations to at least one of the plurality of member in the prepaid healthcare service system.

50. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A method of selling a plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations as described in Claim 49, further comprising ~~the step of~~ recharging each of the plurality of prepaid healthcare identifiers by purchasing an additional plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations.

51. (Currently amended) A method of providing a plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

purchasing at least one prepaid healthcare patient identifier having a preselected number of prepaid healthcare consultations associated therewith from a healthcare provider, the healthcare provider distributing the at least one prepaid healthcare patient identifier upon receipt of a predetermined payment, and the healthcare provider receiving the predetermined payment prior to providing the prepaid

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healthcare consultations; and

distributing the at least one prepaid healthcare patient ~~identifiers~~ identifier to a at least one of the plurality of patients.

52. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A method of providing a plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations as described in Claim 51, further comprising ~~the step of~~ monitoring a remaining number of the plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations and ~~further including the step of~~ informing each of the plurality of patients when the remaining number of the plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations is equal to or less than a predetermined number.

53. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A method of providing a plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations as described in Claim 52, further comprising ~~the step of~~ selecting at least one of a plurality of physicians from a network of physicians to provide at least one of the plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations to at least one of the plurality of patients.

54. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A method of providing a plurality of prepaid healthcare consultations as described in Claim 53, further comprising recharging the at least one prepaid healthcare patient identifiers by purchasing additional prepaid healthcare consultations from a healthcare

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